



INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT

2007-09-0197

November 15, 2007

IMPAIRED DRIVER APPREHENSION

Indiana Inspector General David O. Thomas and Staff Attorney Amanda Schaeffer, after an investigation by Special Agent Charles E. Coffin, report as follows:

This case involved an Office of Inspector General (OIG) Special Agent detecting and assisting in the apprehension of an intoxicated driver.

On September 10, 2007, Special Agent Charles Coffin, formerly with the Indiana State Police for 26 years, was driving in Johnson County, Indiana. He noticed the suspect driver in a vehicle driving erratically on the public road 100 yards ahead of his vehicle. Initially the suspect vehicle was traveling slower than the normal flow of traffic. The suspect vehicle then drove off the right side of the roadway and onto the grass berm, slowly corrected to the left and then drove left of center into oncoming traffic. This was done a second time by the suspect driver.

Although the OIG is a law enforcement agency, traffic stops in Indiana may only be made by an officer if he or she is in full police uniform or,

alternatively, if in a fully marked police car. Special Agent Coffin consequently dialed 911 and kept the dispatcher apprised of the suspect driver's erratic actions as uniformed officers were dispatched to assist.

This erratic driving continued as two fully marked police cars entered the pursuit, one of these officers being Deputy Town Marshall David Lowe. The suspect driver quickly accelerated in the right lane to over 60 miles per hour in the 45 mile per hour zone and continued to veer left of center and engage in dangerous driving to oncoming traffic.

The marked police car then caught up to the suspect vehicle and took over the pursuit, while activating its emergency lights. The suspect vehicle then swerved wide to the left and then back to the right where it approached an intersection and stopped partially up on the right grass berm, nearly striking the stop sign.

Officer Lowe then approached the driver of the suspect vehicle and proceeded with law enforcement action. Special Agent Coffin assisted as other marked police cars arrived on the scene.

Later that evening, Officer Lowe contacted Special Agent Coffin and advised that the suspect driver admitted that he was under the influence of the prescription drug oxycontin. A sample of the suspect's blood was obtained for further testing at Johnson County Hospital after obtaining a search warrant. The suspect also dropped a bag of what appeared to be marijuana on the floor while being processed. Officer Lowe further advised that the suspect was currently out

on work release from a prior driving while intoxicated conviction and that criminal charges for this immediate conduct would also be initiated.

Dated this 15th day of November, 2007.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David O. Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David O. Thomas, Inspector General